

An Indo-European Locution on Early Indian Coin Issues

In an article in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 14 (1986): 138–41 I have studied the outcome in the Gaelic term *morair*, applied to the Great Steward of the king, of the inherited Indo-European syntagma for *GREAT + RULER. In an earlier note (*Études celtiques* 21 [1984]: 139) I recognized this same syntagma in the compound attested in Mediaeval Welsh *mech deyrn*, which must be derived from (pre-) Celtic **maksi-tegernos* < **mæg-si+teges-no-*. The same syntactic phrase has been renewed in Irish, as *ard-rí* ‘great king, High King’, elaborated in ancient Greek as ἄγα-μέμνων, and was applied to Darius in Old Persian. It is of interest to trace the fate of its Indic counterpart *mahārāja* on coins of this region.

We find our locution rendered into Greek among the Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers. On a coin of Eucratides I (171–150 B.C.) we read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ¹ ΜΕΓΑΣ | ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΗΣ, and on another coin the same in the genitive, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ | ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ. On the two sides of no. 265 we have a complete bilingual in Greek and Kharoṣṭhī scripts; obverse: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ | ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ, and reverse: *Maharajasa* | *Eukratidasa*. No. 266 shows that ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ could also be used unmodified with ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ, and this suggests that the source locution had begun to lose its literal phrasal meaning. Such a development is confirmed by the coins of Apollodotus (mid 2nd cent. B.C.), king of the Hindu-kush, Kabul Valley, and Gandhara, whose title appears bilingually ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ = *Maharajasa tratarasa*, and of Lysias (end of 2nd cent.), with ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΙΚΗΤΟΥ = *Maharajasa apadihatasa*, to cite just two rulers from this later period. A particularly revealing coin legend title is no. 313 of Hippostratus: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ = *Maharajasa tratarasa mahatasa jayamitasa*, where the equivalent of μεγάλου is clearly the separate attributive *mahatasa*.

A similar equation is found in no. 321ff. of the Indo-Parthian Maues (22 B.C.–22 A.D.): ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΜΑΥΟΥ = *Rajatirajasa mahatasa Moasa*, where the epithet now modifies (or else metathesizes with) the King of Kings’ formula. We find all the features discussed up to this point displayed cumulatively in no. 326ff. of Azes I (ca. 5–25 A.D.): ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΖΟΥ² = *Maharajasa rajarajasa mahatasa Ayasa*, where βασιλεύς = *maharaja-*, βασιλεύς βασιλέων = *rajaraja-*, μέγας = *mahata-*. A variant of this last is to be seen in no. 342ff. of Azilises

(ca. 25–35³ A.D.), where *rajatirajasa* appears in place of *rajarajasa*.

After this sequence a luxuriant elaboration sets in, whereby no pretense to bilingual equivalence is to be sought. So with Gondophares (ca. 21–50 A.D.) we find (no. 346) on the reverse of ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ (+ the king’s name) the native appellation

Maharajaratirajatratatradavavradagundupharasa,

in which we can discern on the basis of the tradition just reviewed: *maharaja-rajatiraja-tratarata-*, i.e., (μέγας) βασιλεύς + βασιλεύς βασιλέων + σωτήρ. And with the Kuṣāṇas we come to Wema Kadphises II (65–75 A.D.) with the simple title (no. 357) βασιλεύς equated with *Maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga-iśvarasa Vima Kathaphisasa tradarasa*. To this sequence no. 360 presents the variant *Maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga isvarasa mahisvarasa vima kathaphisasa tratarasa* with the more ample Greek ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΜΕΓΑΣ (+ the king’s name); but we see that the strictly unmatched μέγας is still to be somehow balanced against the tautological *sarvaloga isvarasa mahisvarasa*. In fact, the last two are each really re-creations of *maharajasa*.

Thus we see partly a fading, partly a renewal, and partly a proliferation of the same inherited syntagma.

Among the Śakas of western India (nos. 396–447), whose rulers ca. 130–378 A.D. are styled in legends in faulty Sanskrit, the terms *kṣatrapa-* (*kṣatrapasa*) and *mahākṣatrapa-* (*mahākṣatrapasa*) seem to be used with consistency for persons but not for successions, unless there were sharp fluctuations in public piety between fathers and sons.³ On the other hand, we may note that the

¹ Inexactly transliterated *Basileōs*, S. P. Basu, *The Second Supplementary Catalogue of Coins to Vol. I* (Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1977), 41, but see the reproduction, plate VIII.

² Impericely rendered *Azoyu*, S. P. Basu, op. cit., 55; see plate XI.

³ Cf. my formulation and notion of an oral formula in “The Indo-European horse,” in *When worlds collide . . . the Bellagio Papers*, ed. T. L. Markey and J. A. C. Greppin (Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1990), 211–26, esp. pp. 223–24. That is, it is not casual or facultative or socially random that metathesis may occur here; there is a context, linguistic (syntactic) or social.

agruvaḥ. K – *grīvāḥ Pa, śrīvāḥ Gu_c* • The reading of the Orissa MSS (with **Gu_c** *śrīvāḥ* a graphical error corresponding to **Pa** *grīvāḥ*) may be understood as a ‘learned correction’ based on an inferred connection with the body-part mentioned in pāda *a*. We hesitatingly adopt the metrically deficient reading offered by **K**.

***pativatyāḥ. pativityāḥ Pa Gu_c, pativityā K** • Barret reads, probably mistakenly: *patividyā*. His emendation *patividyāḥ*, based on this reading, is improbable as we need a genitive here.

aukṣaṁ. aukṣaṁ Pa Gu_c, om̐ kṣaṁ K • The name of a fragrance *aukṣā-* is further attested at AVP 2.21.6 = AVŚ 2.36.7 (*idam̐ hīraṇyaṁ gūlgulv ayām aukṣo atho bhāgaḥ / eté pátibhyas tvām aduḥ pratikāmāya vétave* “This gold, this bdellium, this *aukṣa* and Bhaga as well: they have prepared you for husbands, that you may obtain one that is agreeable” [tr. after Bloomfield 1897]), in the Apsaras’ name *aukṣāgandhi-* ‘smelling of *aukṣa*’ (AVP 12.7.3 [AVPK 13.4.3] = AVŚ 4.37.3) and at BĀU(K) 6.4.18 = BĀU(M) 6.4.17. These places have been discussed by C. Kiehnle (1979), 188ff. It seems futile to look for an etymology of this term and to combine it with the word for ‘ox’.

śīrṣata ā. Pa Gu_c – śīrṣatā K.

9. Only AVP

yaś ca +svādmā te aṅgeṣu ’yaḥ premā hṛdaye ca te /
(8-8)

taṁ tvad ā veśayāmahe ’mayi bhrājāti +did,yat //
(8-8)

The sweetness which is in your limbs, and the affection which is in your heart, we transfer it to us from you. The resplendent one will shine on me.

***svādmā. smādmā Pa [?] Gu_c, sphāmā K** • If the Orissa reading is correct (**Pa** is barely legible here), it is probably a rather recent corruption due to the similarity of the Oriya ligatures *-sv-* and *-sm-*. As for **K**, the corruption can be explained as a combination of graphical (*-sv-* ~ *-sph-*) and auditory errors (cons. + nas. → nas.: cf. Witzel [1994], 35f.).

aṅgeṣu. Pa Gu_c – aṅge*(→ ŚRA) K • Barret almost certainly misreads the marginal ‘correction’, interpreting it as *ṣu*.

yaḥ. K – *ya{*}ḥ Pa, yaḥ Gu_c.*

taṁ tvad. Pa Gu_c – tantur K.

veśayāmahe. Pa Gu_c – veśayāme K.

bhrājāti +did,yat. bhrājāti didyata Pa, bhājāti diDYata Gu_c, trāgādudid,yat. K • Barret misreads or misprints *trāgād-*. All corruptions in **K** can be explained as graphical or as auditory mistakes (cf. Witzel 1994): the corruption *j > g*, which occurs with some frequency throughout the manuscript, is of especial interest, as it may go back to a Nāgarī predecessor of **K** (cf. Singh, plates 91ff.). On this Nāgarī predecessor (*D), cf. Witzel (1985), 256–71.

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